



## Diego Rivera K-5 Lesson Plan

### Classroom Lesson Time Line:

1. Classroom Preparation: 5 minutes
2. Materials exploration: 8 minutes
3. Presentation: • Power point: 20 minutes
4. Project:
  - Discussion questions of project: 5 minutes
  - Project : 25 minutes

**Art Lesson Objective:** Using a surface of plaster on fiberboard, students will create an image using watercolors. Their image will express something from their life history that has importance to them. Where did they come from, what is important to them about where they live?

Students will learn about the work of Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, who made it his goal to introduce his work into the everyday lives of the people. He painted public scenes of grand themes -- workers' rights, political struggles throughout history and scenes of cultural heritage.

### **Theme of Power Point:**

1. Why Diego painted what he painted – through his art, Rivera was a storyteller. His murals told grand tales of history, from the lives of the native people, to important political figures and the sweep of industry and technology.

→ communicating the sweep of history and the common man's role in it.

2. Diego explored a few different styles of art: cubism, post-impressionism, Aztec references, Mexican heritage references.

→ this demonstrates how artists evolve throughout their careers.

3. In contrast to the exclusive art of galleries, Diego created public art for the whole world (rich and poor) to experience.

→ how does this relate to his choice of subject matter?

Artist Quote:

*I dream my painting and then I paint my dream.*

## Concerns:

1. Some of Diego's paintings are very provocative, though these are not featured in the PowerPoint. Some of Diego's artwork is also very violent, as he was painting during the time of the Mexican and Russian revolutions.
2. This can be a long lesson depending on the children. Please prepare the teacher for this.
3. Kids will use images rather than words to communicate

Concepts to consider

Get to work with materials similar to those Diego himself would have worked with (e.g. child-friendly plaster).

- With fresco, you have to work super fast, and you can't change anything once it dries
- Murals are larger than life. What challenges does this pose?
- Create artwork that communicates a part of your personal history, something important about where or how you live.
- Chemistry of pigments and fresco painting

Skills: Experiment with painting on plaster, communicating with imagery, how to deal with mistakes

Materials: CPL Supplies:

- Masonite boards with plaster (collect one per kid from storage)
- Watercolor set with brush – 1 per student
- Yogurt container with water
- Wipes
- Paper Towel
- CPL plug sheets

Classroom Supplies: • Pencil

**Step 1:** Art Project Preparation: 5 minutes

.Hand out one plaster board and one water color set to each child, with a spare one for each small group for experimentation. Distribute water containers for rinsing brushes.

**Step 2:** Materials Exploration – allow children the opportunity to experiment with the watercolors on shared plasterboard.

**Step 3:** Classroom Presentation: 20 minutes

- Access PowerPoint from provided zip drive or CPL website [www.carnegiepicturelab.com](http://www.carnegiepicturelab.com)
- Please see Theme of PowerPoint on the first page of this lesson plan to help with your delivery.

#### **Step 4:** Discussion Points to have with Students

##### **Understand a few definitions:**

**Fresco:** a painting done rapidly in watercolor on wet plaster on a wall or ceiling, so that the colors penetrate the plaster and become fixed as it dries.

**Mural:** a painting or other work of art executed directly on a wall.

##### **What is a message for a mural?**

Visual expression: Ask the students to think of their own personal history, and their place in it. Is there an important story they want to tell about their life? Is there something about the area we live in that they would like to illustrate? Community events (balloon festival, farming, county fair, etc.) they would like to share in their fresco?

What do you think is important that you want everyone one to know? How can you share that without words?

##### **Step 5:** Art Project 35 minutes:

1. Put your name on the side with the green sheet then turn plasterboard over.
2. Have students sketch their image with pencil. Tell them they CANNOT paint words on the fresco but need to use images to communicate their story.
3. Paint their image or scene with watercolors, try to cover the entire surface.

##### **Common questions asked:**

Q. What should we draw? A. What ever you want. An important scene from your life, a memory of your past, a picture of a community event, an image of what we build or grow in Walla Walla.

Q. Can I start over? A. No. Add to what you've started. It's awesome!

##### **Step 6:** CLEAN UP:

Students can help by:

Wiping down desks/tables, washing out brushes, emptying out water containers and washing them out

##### **Step 5:** Follow Up Discussion: Five minutes

What story did you tell?

Did you need to use words?

What happened to the paint when it was put on the plaster?

What did you do when you made a mistake?

*After the students have finished painting, ask them to think of where they will display their art. This question could be explored via class discussion. Some ideas: The school hallway, their garden, the park, somewhere in their house.*

*\*Ask the teacher if they can share their work with the class and pass along their story that way.*

PLEASE NOTIFY YOUR SCHOOL'S ADVOCATE IF YOU ARE LOW ON ANY SUPPLIES.

Support Materials:

Posters: *Pre-Columbian Life, Peasants, The Flower Carrier, Rivera*

Donated books for each school's library including the public library:

*Diego* by Jonah Winter

*Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera: Their Lives and Ideas, 24 Activities* by Carol Sabbeth

*Diego Rivera: An Artist for the People* by Susan Goldman Rubin

*Diego Rivera: His world and Ours* by Duncan Tonatiuh